

COMPETENCES EMPLOYEES ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE ON THE LABOUR MARKET

Ildikó BUDAVÁRI-TAKÁCS, Fruzsina Éva LUKÁCS, Csilla Judit SUHAJDA

Szent István University, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences

E-mail: frulukacs@gmail.com

Summary: Competences that employees should have can be found most explicitly in advertisements for job vacancies. Studying these ads is not a new method, as Dieter Mertens (1974), German work pedagogist, based his theory on key competences on the analysis of ads for job vacancies in the 1970s. The aim of our research is to study key competences, competences of employees, and competences linked to specific work areas based on advertisements for jobs, thus representing the demands of the labour market. The theoretical background is the competence framework of József Nagy (2000). His theory defines 4 subcategories of competence: personal, social, cognitive and specific competence, and closely resembles the key competence framework of OECD published in 2005. Our research was carried out in 2013. We have systematically selected 300 job advertisements from a pool of 5000 ads. These 300 advertisements were then studied by collecting the terms that referred to personality traits, skills and competence, and the categorization of these terms into competence categories by experts. We used the subcategories of József Nagy (personal, social, cognitive and specific competence) in the process and listed competences based on the frequency of other variables (e.g. area of specialty of the job mentioned in the advertisement), as well. A clear innovation of the study is that key competences and specific competences, which are linked to a specific area of expertise, could be differentiated. In accordance with our hypothesis our findings suggest that the labour market demands few of the key competences from employees. The most frequent key competences mentioned are: communication skills, problem solving, independence, cooperation and creativity. As expected in our hypothesis, the most frequent specific competences were digital competence and competence in second (or other) language(s).

Key words: social, cognitive, personal and special competences, labour market, employee, employer

1. Introduction

Career management self-awareness demands that job seekers know what competences the labour market expects from them. Career management self-awareness is relatively low among Hungarian employees (Nagy, Budavári-Takács, 2014, Budavári-Takács, Csehné Papp, Jekkel, 2014). The aim of our study is to present how aware Hungarian job seekers are concerning competences that the labour market seeks from them.

In the past 50 years many competence models have been formed concerning the world of work (Spencer and Spencer 1993, Bartram, 2005, Kurz, 1999, Borman és Motowidlo, 1993, Hogan and Holland, 2003, Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, és Sager, 1993, Scullen, Mount, and Judge, 2003). At the Economy and Social Sciences Faculty of Szent István University studying the competences related to work and the labour market is a priority, that is why many important publications have been published in this topic in the last years (Bajor et al. 2001, Mészáros és mtsai, 2007, J. Klér, Budavári-Takács, 2010, Varga, Vas, Szira, Bárdos, 2013, Csehné Papp, 2007). The research (Bajor et al. 2001) carried out by the Management

Department of Economy and Social Sciences Faculty of Szent István University, funded by Tempus Public Foundation, lists communication, the ability to quantify, teamwork, problem solving, learning and performance as pivotal key competences on the labour market.

In our research we have used the competence model of József Nagy (2000) as our theoretical background, as it makes competences expected from employees easy to grasp. This theory resembles closely the key competence framework of work that was introduced by OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) in 2005.

The theoretical framework specifies four competence categories that are built up from subcategories. It distinguishes personal, cognitive, social and specific (work related) competences. In our previous study (Budavári-Takács, Suhajda, 2015) we defined what competences were included in each of these categories and what they meant based on competences found in job advertisements (see Table 1.)

Table 1. Definitions of personal, cognitive, social and special competences based on analyses of job advertisements (n=311)

Personal	Social	Cognitive	Special
Activity: energetic, dynamic and agile personality Adaptability: flexible personality, adaptability to changing work conditions, willingness to be mobile Outcome orientation: outcome, solution, performance and success oriented personality Liability: precision, thoroughness and liability in work Creativity: creative and constructive thinking Self-confidence: confident and firm appearance Responsibility: responsible personality Independence: the ability to work alone, high range of independence Proactivity: proactive and energetic personality, being an originator Stamina: the ability to work hard and enduring,	Cooperation: the ability to cooperate, be part of teamwork and cooperate with others The ability to make contact: open, easy-going personality, the ability to connect to other people Communication: good communication skills Management: the ability to organize, coordinate, plan and manage Empathy: amiable, friendly, helpful approach to others, client-oriented approach	Analytic thinking: the ability to analyze and integrate, analytic thinking The ability to bear monotony Problem solving: problem solving thinking Strategic thinking	Foreign language literacy : knowledge of foreign languages (on different levels) Digital competence Entrepreneurship: business 'spirit', sales approach

Source: own compilation

2. The Survey

2.1. Examining job advertisements

The scope of our experiment is to analyze the content of job advertisements on the website 'jobline.hu'. We analyzed 311 job ads. The sample only included ads for Budapest and for full-time jobs. We gathered our sample at three different times (Mészáros, 2014). The first sampling was on 11th January, the second on 11th February and the third on 11th March. Thanks to this sampling method we got an overview of the first quadrant of 2013 concerning ads. At each sampling time we collected in every area of specialty four- four ads at ISCED 3-5 level and at ISCED 6 level or higher, if possible. (Areas of specialties were defined by the clustering of jobline.hu). We analyzed 132 ads with ISCED 5, and 179 ads with ISCED 6 level education in their requirements. We analyzed the content of each ad's requirements section. Words used here were collected, listed and clustered based on József Nagy's competence model. Two independent experts participated in this job.

2.2. Survey for employees

Employees filled out an online questionnaire, where we gave them a list of competences found in job ads. Subjects had to decide on how important they think competences are for employers. The questionnaire was filled out by 112 persons, 42% of them were men, 58% of them women. Their age division :11% 17-20 years old , 69% 20-30 years old, 10% 30-40 years old and 9 % 40-50 years old. The mean age of the sample is 26 years, which means that our study represents the attitudes of young adults the most. 65% of the sample completed secondary education or is currently studying there and 35 % graduated university.

2.3. Hypotheses

We hypothesize that competences ranked first to fifth in importance by employers concerning employees will include competences related to employability (regardless of area of specialty). For the key competences of employability we used the definition of the Employability Working Group Report (2009), that lists the following competences: problem solving, stamina, the ability to work alone, working without clear instructions, loyalty, outcome orientation, leadership, openness to group work, literacy in foreign language, ICT skills, management skills, risk taking, liability, career management self-awareness.

Our own list of competences gathered from the ads includes the following employability competences: literacy in foreign language, digital competence, problem solving, stamina, independence, liability, outcome orientation, cooperation, communication, leadership.

We hypothesize that competences chosen as important by employees do not overlap with competences chosen by employers, resulting in low level of career management skills on the employee's part.

3. Results

We gathered the words for the requirements of the 311 job advertisements in a previous research (Budavári-Takács, Suhajda, 2015). Based on József Nagy's competence framework we clustered requirements into four groups according to their content. We managed to list 23 competences this way (see *Table 1.*). We listed the frequency of competences based on the job ads, and then ordered a frequency rank to the competence (Budavári-Takács, Suhajda, 2015). Then we analyzed the frequency rank of competence by educational level and area of specialty.

Proving our hypothesis, key competences related to employability dominate in ads for jobs requiring secondary school level training (*Table 2.*), as well as, university level training (*Table 3.*) In the tables (*Table 2. and Table 3.*) we marked with an X if the given competence ranked important (1st to 5th) in that area of specialty that marks the column. As can be seen from the data, the most common competences required by job ads are: literacy in foreign language, digital competence, communication, liability and stamina.

Table 2. Competences ranking 1st-5th by area of specialty among ads requiring secondary school level (ISCED 3- 5) training (n=132)

		Administration, assistance	bank-, insurance	Supply and logistics	Health care	Sales, trade	HR, occupational	IT-informatics	marketing-PR	Engineering, technical	Finance, accounting	Physical jobs	Customer service	Tourism
social	cooperation							X		X				
	emphaty		X										X	X
	ability to make contact								X					
communication	communication	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X
	outcome orientation					X								
	liability	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X		
personal	self-confidence		X											
	responsibility							X				X		
	independence	X		X	X		X				X		X	
cognitive	proactivity					X								
	stamina			X	X				X	X	X	X		X
	ability to bear monotony											X		
special	problem solving		X											
	other	X		X										
	literacy in foreign language							X	X	X	X		X	X
digital competence	digital competence	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X
	entrepreneurship					X								

Source: own research

When cross-examining competences desired by employers in job advertisements and the beliefs of employers about competences that employers look for (*see Table 4.*), we can state that the level of career-management skills is not as low among employees as we hypothesized. Both persons with secondary school diplomas and the ones with university degrees listed competences in their top 10 list that employers mentioned in their advertisements as well. One major problem though is that persons with secondary school diplomas still do not realize the importance of literacy in foreign language(s), as they did not list it in their top ten.

Table 3. Competences ranking 1st-5th by area of specialty among ads requiring university level training (n=179)

		administration, assistance	bank, insurance	Supply and logistics	management	health care	Sales, trade	HR, occupational	IT, informatics	law, civil service	Research and development	marketing-PR	Engineering, technical	Quality assurance	Finance, accounting	Customer service
social	cooperation							X	X			X		X		X
	communication	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
personal	liability	X	X			X	X	X		X			X		X	
	independence	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
cognitive	proactivity					X										
	analytical thinking							X								
special	creativity					X					X					
	problem solving												X			X
Literacy in foreign language	Literacy in foreign language	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Digital competence	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Special knowledge	Special knowledge			X	X		X									

Source: own research

Persons with university degrees have not mentioned one of the most commonly (rank 3) expected key competence: liability in their top ten competences they believe employers look for (Table 4.). This result is extremely interesting as this group consists of young adults and the most important psychological criteria of adulthood are liability.

Table 4. Frequency rank of competence needs of employers based on content analyses of job ads (n=311) and the beliefs of employees about the needed competences, divided by necessary education level (secondary/ university degree)

<i>Persons with secondary education</i>			<i>Persons with university degree</i>		
Job ads- needs of employers	rank	Survey- beliefs of employees	Job ads- needs of employers	rank	Survey- beliefs of employees
communication	1	problem solving	communication	1	literacy in foreign language
liability	2	responsibility	literacy in foreign language	2	problem solving
digital competence	3	stamina	liability	3	communication
independence	4	ability to bear monotony	independence	4	digital competence
literacy in foreign language	5	cooperation	digital competence	5	cooperation
stamina	6	liability	cooperation	6	decision-making
cooperation	7	independence	problem solving	7	competitiveness
empathy	8	digital competence	analytic thinking	8	independence
self-confidence	9	willingness to learn	stamina	9	willingness to learn
problem solving	10	communication	activity	10	stamina

Source: own research

4. Conclusions

In our study we examined the key competences that emerge in job ads, as well as, how aware employees are of these required competences, what level of career management skills they have in this area. We had two hypotheses: 1. We hypothesized that competences ranked first to fifth in importance by employers concerning employees' competences in job ads will include competences related to employability regardless of area of specialty. This hypothesis was proven right.

2. We hypothesized that competences chosen as important by employees do not overlap with competences chosen by employers, resulting in low level of career management skills on the employee's part. This hypothesis was not proven. Based on our data employees are more mindful about competences than they are concerning other factors of the labour market (Budavári-Takács, Csehné Papp, Jekkel, 2014).

References

1. Bajor Tamás, Berki Erzsébet, Erdeiné Horváth Klára, Fekete Rita, Kertész János, Komor Levente, Vekerdy Ida, Pörzse Katalin (2001): „Az Európai gyakorlathoz illeszkedő munkaerő-piaci készségigény felmérés a magyar oktatás-képzés fejlesztése szolgálatában”, Tempus Közalapítvány-SZIE GTK, Vezetéstudományi Tanszék, Gödöllő
2. Bartram, Dave, (2005): „The Great Eight Competencies: A Criterion-Centric Approach to Validation”, In: Journal of Applied Psychology, Vol. 90, No. 6, 1185–1203
3. Borman, Walter C., Motowidlo, Stephan. J. (1993): „Expanding the criterion domain to include elements of contextual performance”. In N. Schmitt & W. C. Borman (Eds.), Personnel selection in organizations (pp. 71-98). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
4. Budavári-Takács Ildikó, Suhajda Csilla Judit, (2014): „A munkavállalóktól elvárt kompetenciák vizsgálata álláshirdetések elemzése alapján”, In: Csehné Papp Imola, Budavári-

- Takács Ildikó, Mészáros Aranka, Poór József, (szerk.) Innováció Növekedés Fenntarthatóság, Budapesti Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara Gazdasági Szolgáltatások Tagozat, XX. Tanácsadó Osztály, Budapest
5. Budavári-Takács Ildikó, Csehné Papp Imola, Jekkel Orsolya, (2014): „Karrier építési tudatosság vizsgálata fiatal felnőttek körében”, In: Csehné Papp Imola, Budavári-Takács Ildikó, Mészáros Aranka, Poór József, (szerk.) Innováció Növekedés Fenntarthatóság, Budapesti Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara Gazdasági Szolgáltatások Tagozat, XX. Tanácsadó Osztály, Budapest
 6. Csehné Papp Imola (2007): „*The link between education and the state of the labour market in Hungary*”, Gazdálkodás, english special edition, pp. 157-163.
 7. Campbell, John P., McCloy, Robert A., Oppler, Scott. H., Sager, C. E. (1993): „*A theory of performance*”. In N. Schmitt & W. C. Borman (Eds.), *Personnel selection in organizations* (pp. 35-70). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
 8. Hogan, John, Holland, Brent (2003): „*Using theory to evaluate personality and job-performance relations: A socioanalytic perspective*”. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88, 100-112.
 9. Kurz, Reiner (1999): „*Automated prediction of managerial competencies from personality and ability variables*”. In: *Proceedings of the BPS Test User Conference* (pp. 96–101). Leicester, UK: British Psychological Society
 10. J Klér Andrea, Budavári-Takács Ildikó, (2010): „*A study of the problem solving strategies of university students*” *Practice and theory in systems of education* 5:(4) pp. 399-406.
 11. Mészáros Aranka, Bíró Gyula, Buda Béla, Csernyik Póth Ágnes, Drimál István, Fodor László, Járó Katalin, Kovács Ildikó Éva, Lipták Erzsébet, Magyar Judit, Németh Erzsébet, Páskuné Kiss Judit, Sallay Hedvig (2007): „*Kommunikáció és konfliktuskezelés kezelése a munkahelyen*” ELTE - Eötvös Kiadó, Budapest
 12. Mészáros Róbert (2013): „*Az ideális munkavállaló*”, Szent István Egyetem, Gazdaság- és Társadalomtudományi Kar, Gödöllő
 13. Nagy József (2000): „*XXI. század és nevelés*” Osiris Kiadó, Budapest
 14. Nagy Lilla, Budavári-Takács Ildikó (2014): *Study of career building awareness among Hungarian and German young it professionals*, In: Csaba Bálint Illés, Anna Dunay, Anna Slocinska (szerk.) *New Trends in Management in the 21st Century*. 413 p. Czestochowa University of Technology, Czestochowa, pp. 73-83.
 15. OECD (2005): „*Definition and Selection of Key Competencies: Executive Summary*”, letöltve: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/61/35070367.pdf> (time of access: 18. 11. 2014.)
 16. Schneider, Klaus (2008): „*On the construction and diagnostics of social competence*” *Social Work & Society International Online Journal* letöltve <http://www.socmag.net/?p=421> (time of access: 26.11.2014.)
 17. Scullen, Steven E., Mount, Michael K., Judge, Timothy A. (2003): „*Evidence of the construct validity of developmental ratings of managerial performance*” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88, 50-66.
 18. Spencer, Lyle M., Spencer, Signe M., (1993): „*Competence at Work: Models for Superior Performance*”, John Wiley and Sons, Inc. New York
 19. Varga Erika, Vas István, Szira Zoltán, Bárdos Ilona (2013): „*Kompetencia alapú humánerőforrás-menedzsment területek és a munkapiaci kompetencia-felsőoktatás kapcsolata egy primer vizsgálat tükrében*”. *Humánpolitikai szemle* 7-8: pp. 132-140.
 20. Working group on employability report to ministers bologna conference Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve 28-29 April 2009. URL: http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/LEUVEN/2009_employability_WG_report.pdf (time of downloading: 20 March 2015)